

NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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RAIL SAFETY WEEK

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2021 Rail Safety Week Urges Safety Around Tracks

During Rail Safety Week, the N.C. Department of Transportation urged the public to pay more attention around railroad tracks and crossings.

In America, every four hours a person or a vehicle is hit by a train, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

In North Carolina this year, there have been 34 crossing crashes, resulting in six fatalities and eight injuries. Additionally, 20 known incidents of people walking on tracks resulted in 11 fatalities and six injuries.

“Sadly, those are 17 people who didn’t go home to their families,” said Jason Orthner, director of NCDOT’s Rail Division. “Tracks are for trains, not people. These accidents are preventable if you stay off and away from the tracks.”

The goal of Rail Safety Week is to raise awareness of the need for rail safety education and empower the public to keep themselves safe near highway-rail grade crossings and railroad rights-of-way. NCDOT partners with BeRailSafe and North Carolina Operation Lifesaver, railroads and other safety stakeholders to educate children, teens and adults on the dangers of walking on railroad tracks, property and equipment.

The NCDOT Rail Division wants people to remember these lifesaving tips:

Trains always have the right-of-way, even when emergency and law enforcement vehicles are involved.

Always stop your vehicle when crossing gates are down or lights are flashing. Never drive around the gate or race a train to the crossing.

It can take more than a mile for a train to stop.

It is hard to determine a train’s speed from a distance.

Trains typically overhang the track by several feet. If you are in the right-of-way next to the tracks, you can be hit.

Never assume railroad tracks are abandoned or inactive.

Safety Week Activities Across NC

Operation Clear Tracks in Davidson County

NCDOT BeRailSafe, in partnership with N.C. State Highway Patrol Troop E District 1, held a railroad crossing safety blitz on Sept. 23 in Davidson County.

During the two-hour operation, railroad crossing safety information was shared with more than 440 motorists by nine troopers in the Welcome community and at Hinkle Road at Old U.S. Hwy 52. Additionally, two troopers circulated on foot among parents of children at nearby Midway Elementary School in the carpool lines.

The railroad safety education event was well received by the drivers and was immediately picked up by local community social media accounts, further extending the railroad crossing safety message.

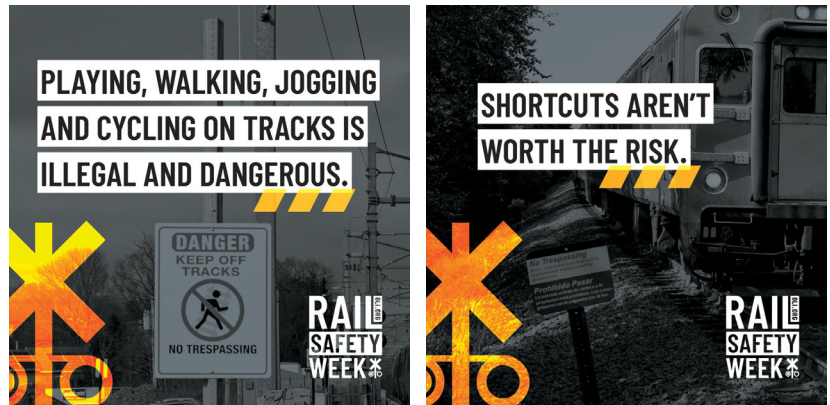


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Operation Rail Safe Blitz in Greensboro



Operation Rail Safe Blitz, held on Sept. 21, was successful in educating the public on safety around train tracks and crossings. Seventeen officers, along with NCDOT Rail Safety Consultant Roger Smock, worked various railroad crossings passing out information on rail safety.



In addition, two officers working on ATVs traveled through and around crossings. Two people were observed on the railroad tracks and were educated and given verbal warnings.

Public Safety Day in Morrisville



BeRailSafe participated in Morrisville's Public Safety Day, educating attendees on crossing safety.



Operation Lifesaver Awards \$200,000 for Crossing Safety Public Awareness Campaigns

As one of the 11 recipient states, North Carolina conducted a video PSA campaign targeting males 18-49 between June 14 and Sept. 27 (including Rail Safety Week) via cable television advertising in seven markets with the highest incident rates.



The North Carolina State Fair – A Favorite Stop



Carolinian Train #80 and Piedmont Train #77 had an extra stop on their schedules Oct. 15-24 – the North Carolina State Fair.

This special stop is at the corner of Hillsborough Street and Blue Ridge Road just outside of Gate 1 of the fairgrounds in Raleigh. The trains provided convenient service to and from the State Fair from stations in Charlotte, Salisbury, High Point, Greensboro, Burlington, Durham and Cary.



The Piedmont made an appearance in the Handicrafts and Hobbies Exhibit.



It's time for football! Get on board the train with other fans on the way to Carolina Panthers games and skip the hassle of traffic and parking.

Back by popular demand, NC By Train is hosting its football trains to carry fans to and from select home games in Charlotte.

On game day, arrive in Charlotte on *Piedmont* train 73 at 9:40 a.m. with plenty of time to enjoy the area around Bank of America Stadium before the 1 p.m. kickoff. Passengers can take their time and enjoy post-game fun before making their way back to the Amtrak station for a 7 p.m. departure on train 78.

REMAINING 2021 GAMES

- Nov. 7: New England Patriots
- Nov. 21: Washington Football Team
- Dec. 12: Atlanta Falcons
- Dec. 26: Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Tickets are available online. Please note, face coverings are required in train stations and on board.

Carolina Coastal Railway Crossing Improved in Pitt County Crossing

Our featured crossing this month is on the Carolina Coastal Railway in Pitt County, located on Queen Street in Simpson. This project improved the siding track crossing. The original timber and asphalt crossing had deteriorated, creating a rough surface. The new asphalt and rubber rail seal crossing provides a safer and smoother ride for local drivers.



134 NC rail crossings have been improved by the FRRCSI Fund.



Queen Street siding before improvements

Queen Street siding after improvements

Welcome New Rail Division Staff!

Troy Creasy Named Manager of Design and Construction Branch

Troy Creasy is the Rail Division's new Manager of the Design and Construction Branch. Troy has an extensive career background with CSX where he managed complex railroad projects and large scale programs. Creasy is a former NCDOT transportation intern and holds a degree in Civil Engineering from North Carolina A&T State University.



Todd Meyer is new Inventory and Data Analysis Manager

Todd Meyer has joined the Rail Division as the Inventory and Data Analysis Manager. Meyer worked most recently in the Division of Aviation as a Senior Airport Project Manager and Acting Statewide Program Manager. He also has NCDOT experience in infrastructure management, grant fund management, information technology and schedule management. Todd is a graduate of NC State and is a registered Professional Engineer.





Construction of the Carolina Connector (CCX) intermodal terminal in Edgecombe County was completed late Sept. and the facility opened for operation on Oct. 7. Information on the significant impact of CCX will be featured in the next Rail Report.

Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction Update



Pouring passenger platform south of 4th Street



Passenger Platform between 5th and Trade streets

The Rail Division is leading the planning, design and construction of Charlotte Gateway Station Phase 1. The City of Charlotte is managing the effort for Phase 2 with developer Gateway Partners for the large mixed use development and station. The Phase I project is targeted for completion in 2023. The scope includes building bridges to support passenger rail tracks, a center island level-boarding platform and concourse, plus railroad track and signals.

Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction Update (continued)



Trade Street looking south toward the block that will be the primary station area for the City's mixed-use development



Constructing scaffolding for pedestrian tunnel